

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending and new claims 21 and 22 are submitted herewith. Applicants appreciate the Examiner's allowance of claims 10-20. The Title and Abstract have been amended to correct informalities as required in the Office Action.

Claims 1-4 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,371,490 to Geesnik ("Geesnik").

Applicants traverse the rejection. Geesnik discloses a mould having a surface having locally more or less scratch shaped recesses, but abutting to them also projections, which have incidentally the shape of fine threads or other particles. (Geesnik, 1:66 to 2:4). The surface of Geesnik may be prepared by scouring. (Id., 1:34-35). Claim 1, on the other hand, recites:

[a] stainless steel structural member for a blockformer apparatus, which structural member has at least one surface along which, in operation, curd slides,
wherein at least part of the at least one surface is a micropeened surface having substantially sloping undulations when viewed on a microscopic scale, said surface having been obtained through a micropeening treatment.

Claim 4 recites:

[a] blockformer apparatus having incorporated therein a stainless steel structural member having at least one surface along which, in operation, curd slides,
wherein at least part of the at least one surface is a micropeened surface having substantially sloping undulations when viewed on a microscopic scale, said surface having been obtained through a micropeening treatment.

It is submitted that Geesnik does not disclose or suggest the claimed micropeened surface having substantially sloping undulations. Figures 2 and 3 of the present application illustrate differences between metal subjected to a traditional treatment such as grinding, brushing, or polishing and metal subjected to micropeening. For at least this reason, Geesnik does not disclose or suggest the entirety of the inventions set forth in claims 1 or 4.

Moreover, Applicants submit that one would not have been motivated to modify Geesnik to even attempt to prepare the claimed stainless steel structural member for a blockformer apparatus having a micropeened surface. Geesnik teaches that irregularities enhance rind formation. (Geesnik, 3:2-4). Thus, Geesnik motivates for increasing the amount of

irregularities and away from preparing the claimed micropeened surface along which, in operation, curd slides.

In view of the foregoing it is submitted that the Office Action does not set forth a prima-facie case of obviousness with respect to claims 1 and 4. Insofar as the foregoing comments with respect to claims 1 and 4 are equally applicable to their dependent claims, the rejections of the dependent claims are also believed to have been overcome. Applicants respectfully submit, therefore, that the rejection of claims 1-4 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) has been overcome. Applicants respectfully submit that the art cited in this case neither discloses nor suggests the present invention. Thus, the pending claims and newly presented claims are submitted to be in condition for allowance.

Other than the fee the additional claims authorized on the accompanying fee sheet, no fee is believed due for this submission. Should any fees be required, however, please charge such fees to Pennie & Edmonds LLP Deposit Account No. 16-1150.

If the Examiner wishes to discuss this case, then Applicants respectfully request a personal or telephonic interview to discuss any remaining issues and expedite the allowance of the application.

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Respectfully submitted,


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